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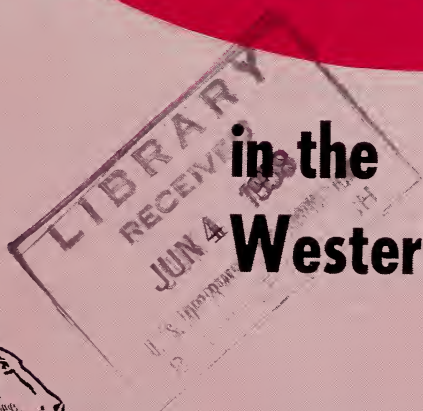
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# REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from

*Milkweed*  
**POISONING**

in the  
**Western States**



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# REDUCING LIVESTOCK LOSSES

from  
in the Western States

## Milkweed POISONING

Several species of milkweeds may cause heavy livestock losses are poison range animals. Species that listed below in order of toxicity.

Common Name	Botanical Name	Distribution
None	<i>Asclepias labriformis</i>	Eastern Utah
Western whorled milkweed	<i>A. subverticillata</i>	Southern Utah and Arizona to western Kansas and western Texas
Woolly pod milkweed	<i>A. eriocarpa</i>	California
Mexican whorled milkweed	<i>A. fascicularis</i>	Washington and eastern Idaho to southern California
Eastern whorled milkweed	<i>A. verticillata</i>	Atlantic Coast and Mississippi Valley

Milkweed poisoning occurs frequently in sheep and occasionally in cattle and horses. Most livestock losses are a result of concentrating hungry animals around milkweed-infested corrals, bed grounds, and driveways. Poisoning also may occur if animals are fed hay contain-

ing large amounts of milkweed.

The leaves and other aboveground portions of the plant are poisonous. They contain a resinous substance and several glucosidal substances. Milkweeds are dangerous at all times, but are most poisonous during the active growing season.

### Where and When It Grows

These plants are often found in sandy soils of plains and foothills. They grow on ranges and abandoned farms, along roadsides, in

pastures, and in ditches, old fields, and other waste places.

Milkweeds start growth in the early spring.










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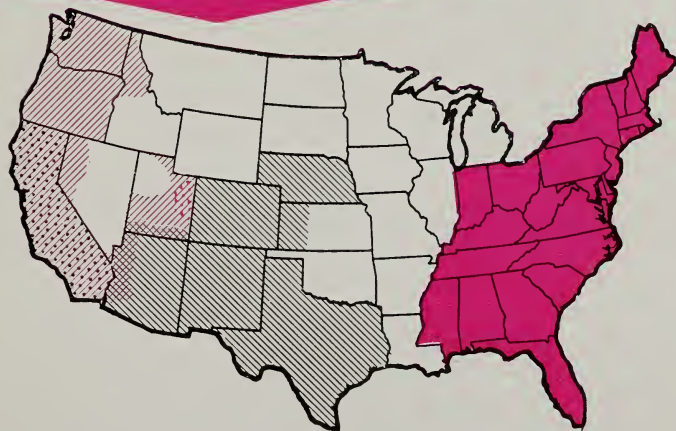


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Milkweeds grow 1 to 3 feet high. The flowers are usually greenish white and are borne in spreading, umbrellalike clusters. Some species have narrow leaves; others have broad leaves. The plants are called milkweeds because they contain a milky juice that oozes out quickly when any plant part is broken. These plants are perennials.

### DISTRIBUTION OF MILKWEED

-  Eastern whorled milkweed
-  Western whorled milkweed
-  Mexican whorled milkweed
-  *Asclepias labriformis*
-  Woolly pod milkweed



## How It Affects Livestock

An average-sized sheep that eats 1 to 3 ounces of green leaves of one of the more toxic species is likely

to die of poisoning. It may die within a few hours or it may live 2 to 4 days.

### Symptoms of milkweed poisoning

1. Loss of muscular control
2. Staggering and falling
3. Violent spasms
4. Bloating
5. Rapid and weak pulse
6. Difficulty in breathing
7. Respiratory paralysis

## How To Reduce Livestock Losses

Animals usually eat milkweeds when good forage is scarce. Livestock owners can reduce losses by keeping animals away from milkweed areas, especially along driveways, when bands of sheep are trailed from one range to another.

Supplemental feeding is usually beneficial.

Eradication of milkweeds in large areas is not practicable. In small areas, the plants may be destroyed by treating them with a herbicide, such as 2,4,5-T.

## Where To Obtain More Information

You can obtain more information on milkweed poisoning by getting in touch with your county agricultural agent or by writing to your State agricultural experiment station or to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Consult your local

veterinarian if you have any questions regarding affected animals. *Note:* The map on page 3 shows areas where most livestock poisoning has been reported. It is possible that milkweed grows in areas other than those indicated.

## *Know Poisonous Plants • Reduce Livestock Losses*

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